The MoEF has also requested other Ministries, such as Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Department of AYUSH, etc to provide support of JFMCs for value addition and marketing of forest products.

(iii) As a follow-up of the mid-term appraisal of Tenth Five Year Plan, a new scheme for afforestation involving Panchayati Raj Institutions for tree planning on non-forest lands is mooted.

(iv) Establishment to two new Eco-Task Force (ETF) battalions for eco-restoration of degraded areas was mooted by the Ministry, in addition to supporting the existing four ETF battalions.

(v) States have been advised to constitute State-level coordination committee under chairmanship of Chief Secretaries for eliciting cooperation of all land-owning Departments for contributing towards increase in forest and tree cover.

(vi) Guidelines have been issued by Government of India on 15-12-2004 to the States for rationalization of regulatory provision about felling and transport of trees grown on private lands, so as to promote tree planting by the masses.

(vii) State Government and Union Territory Administrations have been requested to formulate and implement a comprehensive media plan to create awareness about tree planting.

Forest cover area

†1119. SHRI ISHWAR SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state the total area covered under forests in India and whether Government intends to allot land which is barren to the landless?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): The recorded forest area in the country is 769,626 km^2 which is 23.41% of the geographic area of the country. At the same time the total forest and tree cover of the country has been estimated as 768,751 km^2 constituting 23.40% of the geographic area. Of this forest cover is 677,088 km^2 (20.60%) and Tree Cover is 91,663 km^2 (2.79%). These figures are as per State of Forest Report (SFR), 2005. The restriction on the dereservation of forests or use of forest land for non-forest purpose is guided by forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and rules thereunder.

Elephant menace

†1120. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether elephant menace has increased in the country, recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether Government has conducted any study in this regard; and

(d) whether any proposal is pending with Government to increase compensation being given to people for their losses due to this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) to (c) Some of the State Governments have reported increase in loss of crop damages etc. due to elephant depredation. The Central Government has not conducted any study in this regard.

(d) There is no proposal with the Central Government to increase rates of compensation for losses as the same are fixed by the respective State Governments.

Coastal management zone

1121. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has finalized and circulated the draft on the Coastal Management Zone in accordance with the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and has invited suggestions from all stake holders;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the salient features of this draft;

(c) the details of suggestions received from all stake holders;

(d) whether the National Fishworkers' Forum has expressed some reservations and instead offered some suggestions; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has issued the draft Coastal Management Zone (CMZ) Notification on 1st May 2008 and with an amendment on 9th May 2008 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for inviting suggestion and objection from stakeholders. Based on the request made by some of the State Governments for extension of time, the Ministry has re-issued the CMZ Notification on 21st July 2008. The draft CMZ notification proposes to protect and promote sustainable development in the coastal and marine stretches through Integrated Coastal Zone Management Practices.

(c) to (e) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has received numbers of suggestions and objections from various stakeholders including public, Central and State Government, Industry Association including Fishermen' Association such as National Fishworkers' Forum. The major issues raised are lack of clarity on the set back line, provisions of the draft notification, loss of livelihood of fishermen community due to increased developmental activities etc.

Quartz and stone crushing units

1122. SHRI B. S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state: